



Governor's ESSA Advisory Committee January 11, 2017 Meeting Minutes

OPENING

- The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.
- Governor Markell thanked the Committee members for their service and welcomed Susan Bunting as the incoming Secretary of Education. He thanked outgoing Secretary Godowsky for his leadership and reiterated his support for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- Secretary Godowsky and Committee Chair Matthew Burrows also welcomed the Committee.
- The Committee unanimously approved the minutes from the November 17, 2016 meeting (motioned by Rod Ward, seconded by Patrick Callihan).
- The meeting facilitator went through the evening's agenda and recapped what has taken place since the last meeting. Final ESSA regulations were released, and the submission deadlines shifted to April and September.

PLAN OVERVIEW

- Alex Nock of the Penn Hill Group discussed education policy under the incoming Trump administration, and how Delaware and other states should continue pushing forward with their ESSA plan development.
- Deputy Secretary of Education Karen Field Rogers went through each section of the plan, starting with stakeholder engagement:
 - Aiming for the April 3 deadline
 - Held a second round of community conversations, including two in Spanish
 - Draft plan released on January 9, and final draft will be released on February 28 for a 30-day review period
 - Created a "framework document" that serves as an executive summary of the plan
- For the plan sections:
 - Section 1 – long term goals and measurement: The DDOE refined the long-term goals for academic achievement and graduation rates. Still need to create goals for English Language Proficiency. Philosophy was to have ambitious goals but not unattainable ones that would leave schools frustrated.
 - Section 2 – consultation and project management: Performance management was consolidated into this section, with a clear view of how DDOE will engage with LEAs in monitoring, providing supports and working on improvement cycles.
 - Section 3 – academic assessments: This section describes the state's standards and assessments to ensure students are achieving their highest level.
 - Section 4 – state supports and improvement for low-performing schools: DDOE suggests an n-size of 15. Section also provides more details on schools in Comprehensive Support and Improvement and Targeted Support and Improvement.

- Section 5 – educator quality: Focus on education development and advancement for educators, such as educator preparation, growth, development
- Section 6 – supports for students: Section outlines supports for all students, highlights areas of early childhood, transition from elementary to middle, middle to high, early education to elementary. Effective use of technology as well as family and community engagement. Title I, Title III, Title IV as well as others. After this section, page for assurances that we have to have, challenging academic standards, participation of private school children, children with disabilities, etc.
- Appendix – measurements of interim progress: Broken out to all subgroups as well as going out to 2030.
- Did try highlight where there was stakeholder feedback throughout the plan. Still looking for guidance on English language proficiency. Having national experts come in to help. DDOE will attend the peer review meetings on Jan. 26 for feedback from experts.

PLAN FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION

Committee members engaged in the following discussion, questions and comments:

- What are the differences between the tables for long-term goals?
 - The tables in Section 1 are grade-by-grade; the tables in the appendix consolidate those numbers.
- Why are the goals not more ambitious for students by 2030?
 - We are looking at reducing gaps. Challenging to constantly to move groups forward. Some populations very transient. Trying to figure out best way not to set us up for failure.
- How will the interventions in schools proposed here help?
 - In the past there has been a blanket sort of treatment of schools being identified. Under current plan, there will be a deeper needs analysis, and school's plan will have to align strategies to that needs analysis with evidence-based programs. There is a need for a deeper assessment, with different lenses.
- DSSF will have stars for each metric, and an overall star metric. Looking at more reporting being done, it will be in place by December 2018. A lot more stakeholders and community members involved in planning for DSSF to make it clearer.
- Disagreement with differences in long-term goals for students of color; we should believe that all students can achieve. Why are there no calculations for English Learners? Is it possible to include attainment of bilingual skills as an indicator in the accountability system?
- Amount of assessments required is burdensome. Give more time to teach skills and then test. Tired of testing all the time, they need to be kids. Social skills need to be taught.
 - Districts often set the amount of testing in their schools.
- In the area of social studies, there is no assessment currently, but DDOE is meeting with a social studies coalition to plan for an assessment in 4th and 7th grades, and once in high school.
- Measure of career readiness is needed. There is not really room for vo-techs to show they are doing a good job. Getting students proficient in their trades.
- Measure of growth is needed in the accountability system so students get credit for the amount of growth they make. Measure all growth, of all students regardless of where they are. State Board of Education would be willing to work with DDOE on this issue.
- Will final Committee meeting be after the final draft? No, meeting will be February 2nd or 8th. Shouldn't we have it after the final draft is done?
 - Final meeting (fourth) of this Committee is on the second draft. On February 28th it goes out to the public. Point of fourth meeting is to review the second draft and give final feedback. According to the Executive Order, main charge of committee is to provide feedback. No actions after that.
- Will this committee be engaged if comments come back from USED?
 - It's up to the new governor to decide where this group goes from there.

- Current level of supports is not working. Is there anywhere in this plan that states, “We gave it a good try but we can’t fail our children anymore.” Anywhere in this plan that school has to shut down if not meeting needs?
 - Don’t have legal ability to take over district schools. What can we do to help school board, district office to support schools as well. This is a national question that we are all wrestling with. Open to ideas.
 - This Act is dramatically different from what was imposed under Race to the Top in that it gives states more flexibility to get it right. We have to work on what happens when goals not met. We need to work together to get the long-term goals to be achievable. We want to explore national best practices to support schools, teachers and school leaders. Trying to find some balance to make it work.
- Are we looking at attainment of English proficiency or are we looking at other areas? One time we were talking about getting bonus or additional points if you have students who are bilingual. We need to acknowledge that feedback.
- Questions surrounding benchmark goals for 2030. Wondering because numbers don’t match between goal in report and numbers in appendix.
 - The numbers in the appendix combine certain indicators, so the goals are somewhat different.
- We know what supports are, why haven’t we done them yet? Punishment doesn’t work, or labeling schools, staff or communities. Supports need to be in place now. What are the supports that are going to take these kids and get them to level they need to be. If same group of adults doing same thing for last eight years and getting same results, maybe we need different set of adults. Children deserve it.
- Need to look at other states’ best practices. What are we using as benchmark for these numbers? Are we looking outside of our own domain?
 - Tried to look at previous tests and how we have been successful. Students with lower proficiencies need to make greater gains. Can they continue to do that every year? Some schools have tremendous gains.
- Success starts at your building and district level. Going to be in your school and district success plan. ESSA plan is accountability document created by feds so you could give those numbers to throw back and forth. Hoping it will be different from what it has been in past. Don’t believe true needs assessments were done as schools identified as PZ schools then as Priority schools. No effort to go in and find out what exactly is going on in the school. What are you lacking? What do they need to succeed? Do an actual needs assessment and build a plan around it.
- Get rid of 19 districts and go to 3, put aides in the classrooms, do mindfulness schools. Have opportunity to do so. Change the way we do schooling.
- Do away with Superintendents, get your community involved.
- Challenge everyone to meet districts, when they write their plans; teachers and community needs to be involved.

CONCLUSION

Committee Chair Burrows would like to schedule one more meeting. Sent an email requesting which date works best for Committee members – February 2nd or February 8th. Please let him know by end of business day tomorrow. Majority rules will apply in decision of date.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Four members of the public commented about:

- The need for all community organizations and agencies to come together in support of their schools and students; can’t expect DDOE or districts to do it all.
- Groups such as the United Way and the Urban League are happy to get involved in the ESSA development process.
- Schools need support now; they can’t wait for the ESSA plan to be written and approved.

- Social studies and history needs to come alive for students, particularly African-American students who are not aware of their community's historical achievements and contributions. Hiring more staff who are persons of color is a solution.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

DRAFT